

It's Time to Turn America's Lights Back On

Whenever I am required to wear a mask, generally in the grocery store or the public library, my glasses immediately fog up.

This is clear evidence my mask doesn't work. That mist derives from my breath escaping the mask.

My masks are also ineffective because like many people I only own two of them, one cloth, one gauze, and I have worn them when required for two months.

In "Do Masks Really Work? Here's What the Charts Tell Us," Matt Margolis offers readers a [series of charts](#) regarding the failure of masks to protect us and those around us.

Of course, some people take their masks seriously. Just a couple of days ago, I was sitting on my front porch when a mid-30s man, a stranger in this neighborhood, walked down the street wearing a mask. Accompanying him was an unmasked girl around 12 years old. The weather was gorgeous, no one else was on the street, and he was in a neighborhood where many of the houses are a football field apart.

So why the mask?

By now all of us are aware of the damage done by this pandemic: a booming economy wrecked, thousands of businesses large and small closed forever, churches and schools shut down to the detriment of those who attend them, nursing home patients isolated from loved ones, and weddings, funerals, and other public events either cancelled or restricted in size.

But what about the invisible effects of these masks and restrictions on mind and soul?

The Center for Disease Control [reported](#) recently that in late June “40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use,” a number we can only guess has increased as so many states have remained in lockdown. A later [study](#) led by Boston University researchers found that the rate of depression had tripled in all demographic groups in the U.S. in the last six months, and predicts many of these people will suffer long-lasting symptoms from this condition.

All the institutions that normally give comfort to us – our churches and schools, the various group activities for our children, sports, and celebrations of all sorts – have gone missing now for months. The shutdown and an unrelenting drumbeat of fear in the national media have brought a darkness to our land.

Moreover, some of the restrictions are nonsensical. Why, for example, are the banks closed here in Virginia and in North Carolina? The stores are open, restaurants are allowing limited seating, and some children have returned to school, but the banks remain open only by appointment. Are banks somehow breeders of coronavirus?

Add to all this craziness a summer of riots, bitter political acrimony, and the uncertainties of the upcoming presidential election and its aftermath, and the darkness in our land only deepens.

So now some questions.

Was the “cure” for coronavirus – all these precautions – worse than the disease itself? If so, will any of our politicians ever admit they made a mistake? Their mandates and often-ridiculous orders seem to have damaged the American spirit. How do we regain the joy of living lost over recent months?

I suspect the answers to the first two questions are yes and no respectively, although I can offer no solid evidence. I can, however, make a firmer reply to the last question, based

on my own experience.

In January of 2020, before I had any inkling of the national nightmare headed our way, joy came spontaneously to me. Sitting on the porch at dawn with a coffee, watching the sun set over the hills, laughing with my daughter on the phone, or listening to some children down the street playing in their yard: all brought contentment and happiness.

To summon that same delight today requires self-exhortation and force of will. I have to remind myself to be grateful, to look for the small pleasures, and even then they arrive clouded by the ongoing signs of pandemic. Where I once enjoyed shopping for groceries, seeking out bargains or picking up some random food I'd never before tasted, now the sight of masked shoppers depresses me. Ditto on my visits to the library.

Maybe it's time for some pushback.

Some have already begun that resistance. More than 400,000 people, including 30,000 scientists and health professionals, have signed the [Great Barrington Declaration](#), a document urging governments around the world to end their lockdowns and restrictions, to allow the young and healthy to return to school and work and resume their normal lives.

Instead of our continuing complacency and compliance, maybe it's time for a healthy dose of rage. Our priests and ministers need to protest more vigorously against church closures. Our public schools need to follow the example of their private school counterparts and reopen their doors. In every way possible, we need to tell our governors and mayors we're done, and so are they.

And whenever possible, we should ditch the masks. They are a sign of submission and fear.

It's long past time to turn the lights back on in America.

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